

**Outcome Measures Survey Component
Frequently Asked Questions
2015-16**

GENERAL

1. Who is the best institutional representative to complete the Outcome Measures (OM) survey?

The individual who completes the Graduation Rates, Graduation Rates 200, and Completions survey components may be the best person to complete the Outcome Measures survey. This individual will most likely have to work closely with the registrar and enrollment managers.

2. Will race/ethnicity and gender be required in future years?

There are currently no plans to collect race/ethnicity and gender for Outcome Measures because of institutional burden and the federal need to obtain the data as soon as possible.

3. Is the Outcome Measures survey component similar to the Student Achievement Measure (SAM) project?

OM is similar to SAM in that both have the same goal of measuring postsecondary success and progression of undergraduate students. However, the methodologies used to measure the outcomes are different. First, OM is part of the mandatory IPEDS collection compared to SAM's voluntary participation. Second, OM has 4 cohorts and SAM has up to 7 cohorts. Third, SAM captures student progress and success at the award level (bachelor's and associate's/certificates awards), whereas OM does not make a distinction between award levels. Lastly, the time points for SAM varies depending on the cohorts compared to OM's standard use of 6-year and 8-year time points across all cohorts. For more information on SAM, see <http://www.studentachievementmeasure.org/resources>

OM TERMINOLOGY CLARIFIED

4. What is a "still enrolled" degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate student?

For academic year reporters, a degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate student who is actively enrolled for credit at the institution during the most recent term (spring or summer) is considered still enrolled. For program and hybrid reporters, a still enrolled degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate would be an undergraduate student enrolled for credit during the previous year.

5. What is a "non-first-time" degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate student?

A non-first-time degree/certificate undergraduate student is new to your institution, but has prior postsecondary experience. This term will most likely refer to students reported as transfer-in on the Fall Enrollment component of the entry year of the cohort. Transfer-in students may enter with or without credit.

6. Are the Outcome Measures' 6-year and 8-year time points the same as Graduation Rates' 150% and 200% of normal time?

No, these are not the same. Graduation rates of 150% and 200% of normal time are accumulated progress of time-to-degree. The 6-year and 8-year snapshots used in OM provide the status of awards

and enrollment at 6- and 8-years after a cohort enters the reporting institution. More specifically, OM counts the first award conferred regardless of the length of time it took the student to complete the program relative to the “normal” time to complete. OM requires institutions to report the award/enrollment status for each of the four student cohorts, and there are no specific reporting requirements as to how quickly an award must be earned. Do not equate or use Graduation Rates’ “normal time to degree” as the same period of time for Outcome Measures’ 6- and 8-year award statuses.

TRACKING SUBSEQUENT ENROLLMENT

7. Are institutions required to subscribe to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) in order to obtain data needed to report the number students that subsequently enrolled at another institution?

IPEDS neither requires nor endorses institutions to subscribe to the NSC or any other third-party organization to help with reporting. However, IPEDS realizes that fee-based services can facilitate an institution’s reporting of the Outcome Measures survey component.

8. Can social media be used to confirm the enrollment at subsequent institutions?

Yes, however IPEDS neither requires nor endorses the use of social media (e.g., LinkedIn), which may help with OM reporting of enrollment at subsequent institutions. However, IPEDS encourages institutions to use additional methods, such as alumni surveys, to verify and confirm subsequent enrollment.

9. What other resources are available to help me report on subsequent enrollment?

For institutions that report student unit-record data to a coordinated-system office (e.g., coordinating board, system office, state department of higher education, board of regents/trustees, etc.), those offices may be a resource to help identify subsequent enrollment at another institution within that coordinated system .

COHORTS

10. Does OM have two different cohort years for 4-year and 2-year institutions in the same fashion as Graduation Rates cohort years?

No, OM has only one cohort year for both 2-year and 4-year institutions. Furthermore, the OM forms for 2-year and 4-year institutions are the same. For the 2015-16 collection year, all degree-granting institutions, regardless of institution level, will report on undergraduate students who entered their institutions in 2007. Academic year reporters will report on a fall cohort (either the institution’s official fall census date or October 15, 2007). Program and hybrid reporters will report on a full-year cohort (September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2008).

11. How do I count students who enrolled during the prior summer?

Academic year reporters should include students who enrolled in the fall term and also those who entered the institution for the first time in the prior summer term. This guidance is not applicable to program or hybrid reporters.

12. What about spring cohorts? Should students who enroll during the spring be included?

Academic year reporters should only report on a fall cohort and should not include students who entered the institution during the spring. However, program and hybrid reporters should include in their full-year cohort students who entered during the full year of September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2008. Thus, for the 2015-16 OM collection, program and hybrid reporters will include students starting in the spring of 2008.

DEGREE-GRANTING STATUS

13. If an institution was not a degree-granting institution in 2007, but later became a degree-granting institution, will that institution be required to complete the Outcome Measures survey component?

Yes. All degree-granting institutions are required to complete the OM survey component, including those that were non-degree-granting in 2007.

DEGREE-SEEKING AND NON-DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS

14. Should students be included in Outcome Measures cohorts if degree/certificate-seeking intent is not explicitly stated?

The institution should try to determine, to the greatest extent possible, whether the student is degree/certificate-seeking. For example, students must be degree/certificate-seeking to receive federal student aid. Students who are eligible for federal student aid but decide not to receive aid are still considered degree/certificate-seeking and should be included in the appropriate Outcome Measures cohort. Students who are not eligible for federal student aid and who have not clearly stated their degree/certificate-seeking intent should be excluded from OM.

15. If I am an academic year reporter, how do I report students who begin at my institution as non-degree/certificate-seeking students in the fall, but in the following spring term enroll as degree/certificate-seeking students?

For academic year reporters, do not include these students in any of the fall cohorts because the students did not enter at that same institution as degree/certificate-seeking students during the reporting period. For example, if the student enters an institution the fall of 2007 as non-degree/certificate-seeking, but then becomes degree/certificate-seeking at the same institution the fall of 2009, this student should not be included in either fall 2007 (OM collection 2015-16) or fall 2009 (OM Collection 2017-18). For the 2015-16 OM collection, the reporting period for academic year reporters is either as of October 15, 2007, or the institution's official fall census date.

16. If I am a program or hybrid reporter, how do I report students who begin at my institution as non-degree/certificate-seeking students, but the following year they become degree/certificate-seeking?

For program or hybrid reporters, if during the reporting period these students become degree/certificate-seeking students, include these students in the OM cohorts. However, if the students become degree/certificate-seeking at the same institution outside of the OM reporting period, do not include these students in OM reporting. For example, if a non-degree/certificate-seeking student entered an institution on October 15, 2007, and then became degree/certificate-seeking on September

16, 2008, this student would not be included in OM reporting. For the 2015-16 OM collection, the reporting period covered for program or hybrid reporters is September 1, 2007, to August 31, 2008.

17. How do I report students who were non-degree-seeking at another institution and subsequently enrolled at my institution as degree/certificate-seeking students?

Because these degree/certificate-seeking students entered a new institution, these students should be included in that institution's OM reporting according to that institution's reporting type (academic or program/hybrid) and the respective reporting period covered (fall cohort or full-year cohort).

AWARD RELATED QUESTIONS

18. What does "award" mean?

An award can be either a formal certificate or degree (e.g., Associate's or Bachelor's degree) conferred by the reporting institution that would be included on the IPEDS Completions Survey. For OM, an award does not mean financial aid award.

19. How would a student who transfers from a 4-year institution to a 2-year institution and then completes a lower-level degree/certificate be counted?

When completing OM, the 4-year institution would report this student from the appropriate cohort as subsequently enrolled at another institution. The 2-year institution would place this student in one of the two non-first-time entering cohorts and then count this non-first-time entering student as having received an award from the institution.

20. If a student earns multiple awards at my institution, do I count the higher award? In which award column would the student's award be counted?

Report only the first award conferred by your institution, and do not report subsequent awards. Award levels are not differentiated for purposes of OM reporting. Therefore, one (and only one) award is reported for each student, regardless of whether the student earns multiple awards at your institution. The first award must be reported in either the 6-year or 8-year column depending on when the first award was conferred.

21. If a student transfers-in with an award from another institution, and then earns an award at my institution, which award do I count?

Do not count awards conferred from another institution. Institutions should only count and report the first award conferred by their own institution.

22. How do I count students seeking a second baccalaureate degree?

The answer depends on whether the student is seeking the second baccalaureate at the same institution or a different institution.

If the student is seeking a second baccalaureate at the same institution (Fall Enrollment counts these students as "continuing students"), do not reset the time period for this student or place him/her in a new cohort. OM wants to know when these students received their first award (degree/certificate) at

the same institution over a span of 8 years. These students should be counted in one of the four cohorts for the first award only. Any additional degrees/certificates beyond the first award at the same institution are not counted in future/different cohort years or cohorts. See response to FAQ #20 regarding students earning multiple awards at the same institution.

If the student is seeking a second baccalaureate at a different institution from where the student received his/her first baccalaureate (Fall Enrollment counts these students as “transfer-in students”), then count these students as degree/certificate-seeking, non-first-time entering students (either full-time or part-time). These students have prior postsecondary experience, but are seeking a degree/certificate at the different institution.

23. How should I count a student who left my institution and is known to have received an award at a subsequent institution?

At the 8-year status, count such students in the category “did not receive an award and subsequently enrolled at another institution.” If your institution did not confer the award, your institution does not report the award.

24. Does transfer-prep count as an award?

Yes. As is also the case with the Graduation Rates component, the OM component has a provision that allows institutions to count students who have successfully completed a transfer-preparatory program as having received an award.

A transfer-preparatory program is defined in 34 CFR Student Assistance General Provisions, Section 668.8(b)(1)(ii), as “the successful completion of at least a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor’s degree and qualifies a student for admission into the third year of a bachelor’s degree program.” The Secretary considers transfer-prep the equivalent of an associate’s degree, thus completers of transfer-preparatory programs (although these students do not receive a “formal award”) should be counted as having received an award for purposes of OM.

25. Can stackable credentials count as an award?

Yes, stackable credentials can be counted, as long as the credentials meet the definition of an award. According to the Department of Labor, stackable credentials are “a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual’s qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-payer jobs” (Source: TEGL 15-10, www.doleta.gov). Educause (Jan 27, 2014) explains these credentials as an institution-designed “pathway for students to acquire credentials along a trajectory that can lead to a baccalaureate and beyond but that has exit and entry points designed in a way to allow students to pick up wherever they left off en route to the next level of achievement.”

COUNTING NON-FIRST-TIME ENTERING STUDENTS (AKA TRANSFER STUDENTS)

26. How should I count transfer-in students?

At your institution, transfer-in students should be counted as non-first-time entering students in either the full-time or part-time cohort. The progress of transfer-in students should be tracked at 6 and 8 years after entering your institution.

27. Won't there be double counting of a student if two institutions are counting the same student who earned an award?

Institutions should report only awards conferred by their institution. Students who transfer into your institution and receive an award from your institution within the reporting period should be reported only by your institution. The institution sending the student to your institution would report the student only as a "student who subsequently enrolled at another institution." Thus, the same student should not appear in the same outcome category for both institutions.

28. Are first-time or non-first-time students who transfer-out to another institution included in the non-first-time entering cohort of the transfer-in institution?

Yes. If first-time or non-first-time students who transfer into your institution and never have been previously enrolled in your institution, you should include them in either your full-time or part-time, non-first-time entering cohort.

29. How do I report a degree-seeking student who starts out at my institution, transfers to another institution, but then returns to my institution within the 8-year timeframe?

Students should be counted in their original cohort only. If the student subsequently enrolls in another institution and returns to your institution within the reporting period, the student should be reported in one of the two categories: 1) did not receive an award and still enrolled at your institution or 2) received an award from your institution. Once a student enters a cohort year, that student remains in that same cohort year at your institution.

STUDENTS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT

30. How do I count students in a dual enrollment program? What about students who received early admission to my institution?

Students who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, but are enrolled in a high school diploma or equivalent program while taking college-credit coursework, are considered "non-degree-seeking" students. After the students have earned their high school diploma or equivalent, and when they enroll at a postsecondary institution the following fall, they are then considered "first-time" students. This guidance is the same for the early admission students. Until the high school student has received a high school diploma or equivalent, the student is not considered degree-seeking and is not included in any of the OM cohorts. In other words, these students do not enter an Outcome Measures cohort until after earning their high school diploma or equivalent.

31. How do I count adult learners who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, but are certificate-seeking students taking credit-bearing undergraduate courses?

Students, who are enrolled in college-credit coursework, but have not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent and do not plan on earning a high school diploma or its equivalent, should be included in OM if they are degree/certificate-seeking students.

DATA REPORTING REVISIONS

32. If, after completing OM, an institution discovers a mistake in their reporting (e.g. mis-classification of student(s) or mis-reporting of awards, etc.), how does the institution make the correction?

The institution should contact the IPEDS Help Desk. In some cases, it may be possible to make the correction in the current collection year. In other cases, it will be necessary to wait and use the Prior Year Revision System during the subsequent collection year. The Help Desk can provide guidance on the appropriate solution.